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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 003065

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EG](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: ADDITIONAL EGYPTIAN VIEWS ON A PROPOSED
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON IRAQ AND PREPARATORY MEETING IN
CAIRO

REF: STATE 71272

Classified by Charge Gordon Gray for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Responding to reftel demarche on the U.S.-EU sponsored conference on Iraq and a possible Egyptian-sponsored preparatory conference (PrepComm), poloff met April 19 with MFA senior Cabinet member Alaa Hadidi. Drawing from reftel talking points, poloff shared our preliminary responses to GOE questions and concerns regarding the PrepComm proposal, including on topics such as participation, the agenda, dates, and location for the various meetings. Hadidi welcomed the clarifications and information, and looked forward to hearing the results of Ambassador Jones's consultations after meetings in European capitals. Hadidi said that Egypt was certainly interested in hosting the PrepComm, as Ambassador Jones had heard during his April 11 meetings in Cairo, but noted that his Minister was curious why neither the Europeans nor the Iraqis had approached the GOE yet about hosting this PrepComm. Hadidi said that the GOE was in favor of moving ahead on the PrepComm proposal but would key its formal response to the formation of a new government in Baghdad, similar PrepComm interest from the Europeans and Iraqis, and additional consultations with the USG following Ambassador Jones's latest talks in Europe.

2. (C) Turning to specific details of the U.S. proposal, Hadidi understood our interest in keeping the prepcomm relatively small and manageable and made no effort to press for broader attendance, with the exception of questioning whether the Arab League and China might be included. Hadidi appreciated clarifications that all members of the G-8 were to be invited to the PrepComm, but noted his understanding that Bahrain - not the United Arab Emirates - was currently the Chair of the Gulf Cooperation Council. If the UAE is to be invited, it should be made clear on what basis the invitation will be issued in order to avoid diplomatic complications with other neighbors.

3. (C) On the draft communique, Hadidi sought clarification on whether Egypt should present an initial draft or if Iraq and/or others would craft this document. Poloff shared that the "small group" consisting of Iraqis, the U.S., the EU, Egypt, and possibly the United Nations would likely consult ahead of the prepcomm on a draft communique that could be discussed in detail at the PrepComm and shared later with all attendees to the full conference. Hadidi had no reaction to our description of what the full ministerial conference agenda might entail.

4. (C) Hadidi, who was supposed to have been in Istanbul for the Iraq Neighbors meeting, confirmed that the Turkish MFA had moved the meeting to April 27-28, pending word on the formation of a new Iraqi government. Hadidi said that he was trying to get the Turks to delay the meetings by one day (to April 28-29) so that both his Minister and the Saudi Foreign Minister could attend. Responding to poloff's question as to whether Egypt was ready to resume full diplomatic relations with Iraq once a new government was in place, Hadidi said that he "presumed that was the case." (Note: Our British Embassy colleagues reported to us that FM Aboul Gheit told UK Ambassador Plumbly last week that Egypt was ready to restore normal bilateral relations with Iraq once a government was in place in Baghdad and that the Arab League was similarly interested in opening a new page in its relations with Baghdad. End note.)

5. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.

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